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I. F. Stone's Weekly

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An End of Government by Alarum

Momentous conclusions hopeful for world peace flow from the budget statement made by the President at his press conference last week. He announced a new approach to the problem of defense. He said, "We reject the idea that we must build up to a maximum attainable strength for some specific date theoretically fixed for a specified time in the future". The tempo of rearmament was no longer to be "tied to any magic critical year." This means an end of government by annual alarum, and an end of government by alarum in America must contribute materially to an easing of world tension. Under Mr. Truman, the Pentagon threw Congress and the country into a dither annually. Military appropriations were enacted by stampede.

A correspondent reminded Eisenhower that the maximum target date of 1954 was supposed to mark the time when (in the opinion of the Joint Chiefs of Staff) the U.S.S.R. would be ready to launch an atomic attack on the United States. Eisenhower's answer was refreshingly calm. He said he was not going to quarrel with the estimate of when the Russians would have the atom bomb because he does not admit that anyone can predict when, if ever, another government would want to launch into global war. He added that he just did not believe there was a necessary relationship between the two. The quiet reply deviated strikingly from the demonology of the cold war.

The concept of a target date for an arms buildup made sense only if over-all policy was pointed toward a showdown. This was in fact the basic premise of Truman-Acheson "total diplomacy." All negotiations were to be avoided until we had built up such overwhelming power that the Russians would have to choose between surrender or destruction. To abandon the target date is not only to relax the public mind from artificial frenzies but to establish conditions from which a different foreign policy must flow.

The dominant drift of Eisenhower policy is making Dulles an anachronism. "Liberation" is no longer a conceivable goal if we are not to create a destructive power so overwhelming as to force Russian withdrawal. The stretch-out of rearmament is defensive; it will not support an aggressive diplomacy. The new policy presupposes co-existence for a long time to come. The co-existence need not be friendly but co-existence of any kind demands some mutual adjustment. If "a healthy American economy" and "a functioning economy" in other countries are, as the President said, "inseparable from true defense", then there are circumstances under which successful negotiation for relaxed tension and reduced armament may increase real security. The implications are not those to which we have become accustomed in the last few years when the bugaboo was any relaxation of tension!

It is not that the Republicans hate the Communists less. It is merely that they love a balanced budget more. Taft said it in Chicago on February 21 when he warned that "we could destroy our liberty by a military and foreign expenditure in time of peace so great that a free economic system cannot survive". There is no such thing as building up to a final situation of strength between two great Powers. An increase on one side is matched by an increase on the other; new weapons of offense call forth new means of defense. Tension and hostility must be stimulated to maintain the competitive pace and no country is too rich to avoid impoverishment if the process is unchecked.

General Eisenhower is proving much less bellicose than Captain Truman. "Disengagement" rather than "liberation" seems to be his principal objective, and one of the things he wishes to disengage is the public purse from the grip of the military. His new reorganization plan strengthens civilian control. David Lawrence in alarm called it downright unconstitutional. Senator Symington, through whom the Air Force and the air lobby speak, insisted that the Joint Chiefs of Staff should have the right to state their views "without pressure from anyone to alter those views on economic grounds." The President was alarmingly non-committal when asked about the 143-group air force goal and Symington was almost shrill when he protested in his speech at Charlottesville last week, "no one at any level has the right to place solvency above security." The Democrats now seem to be the war party. The Republicans are not sure the 8 and a half billion reduction promised by Eisenhower will be enough; they still want a tax reduction. The Democrats grumble that he may be endangering security by too sharp cuts.

How understand what is happening? The Democrats, the popular party, have always been a cheap money party. The Republicans came back to power where they went out—in anxiety over the budget. The dollar cannot be "strengthened" without sharp cuts in expenditure; the only place where sizeable cuts can be made is in military spending. The Democrats, under Red smear attack since 1936, did not dare suggest we could cut down arms in face of The Menace. The Republicans are under no such compulsion. They speak for and through big business men who want an end to spending.

The key word of the Administration seems to be deflation. No Democrat would dare handle the military as Charles Wilson of GM is doing, or to talk of the military the way his deputy, Kyes, also from General Motors, did last week before the annual meeting of the U. S. Chamber of Commerce, lashing out at the incompetence and extravagance in the Pentagon. How the military must miss those docile Democrats! I, though never a card-carrying Republican, am beginning to like Eisenhower. If Moscow and Peiping are wise they will come to terms with him before the desperate stage some new provocation to keep peace from breaking out.

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Is Freedom of The Press Under Attack?

This appeared last week-end on the bulletin board of the press gallery in the House of Representatives, "Chairman Harold H. Velde (R. Ill.) of the House Committee on Un-American Activities, today announced in connection with the forthcoming hearings in New York City May 4, that Cedric Belfrage, editor of the publication called the 'Guardian' is apparently operating under the delusion that his association with that publication places him in the category of being a member of the press and is making charges that his scheduled appearance before the committee is an attack on freedom of the press."

The announcement continued, "'I doubt very much if the members of the nation's press consider him worthy of being classed as a colleague of that great institution of the Fourth Estate', the Chairman said." The press release went on to explain that testimony before the Committee showed that Belfrage "has been, and may now be, a member of the Communist Party." If this is the kind of stupendous discovery Velde made when he was an FBI man, his election to Congress was no loss to J. Edgar Hoover. The revelation, if true, is about on a par with the disclosure that the editor of the Chicago Tribune, the redoubtable Colonel McC., "has been, and may be now, a member of the Republican party."

Hardly A Scoop

Velde must be running short of sensations, may soon be exposing the Daily Worker as a Communist organ. His snide little driblet of a press release was chiefly interesting for the simple-minded FBI-man's notions it reflects of what constitutes freedom of the press. This would seem to be the prerogative only of politically pasteurized organs. But the heroes of the fight for a free press, and its martyrs, were no more respectable in their time than Belfrage. Zenger, Wilkes, Paine, Lovejoy and Garrison were as much looked down upon in their time by "right thinking" people.

Freedom of the press was under attack last week from three separate groups of Congressional snoopers. Velde's subpoena for Belfrage followed on the heels of the session to which the McCarthy committee subjected James Wechsler, editor of the New York Post.

The Senate Internal Security subcommittee announced that a witness who had pleaded the Fifth amendment on spy ring questions had reviewed 53 books for the Saturday Review of Literature and "about 38 books" for the New York Herald-Tribune.

This was no mere search for febrile sensations. The pattern, like so much in the current Red hunt, was outlined in the annual U. S. Chamber of Commerce reports since 1945 on "community action" to deal with the menace of Communism. The "infiltration" of the press by radicals was stressed, the liberal press was a special target, and much was made of the fact that rightist literature was being given unfavorable book reviews. The press was not to be immune from the drive to purge non-conformists from all professions which had to do with ideas. Newspapermen were not to be exempt from the purge of teachers, librarians, radio broadcasters, writers and artists of all kinds. The turn of the press had come at last.

Whether the press knew it or not was a different matter. The Wall Street Journal last week had a piece strongly defending — Zenger. The New York Times and the New York Herald-Tribune both had strong editorials protesting infractions of freedom of the press —in Ecuador. The New York Post was manfully defending the New York Post— but as we went to press had yet to say a word in defense of the Guardian. Times had changed a great deal since the days when the conservative Republican Herald-Tribune in 1934 defended the Daily Worker against criminal libel charges brought by District Attorney Dodge.

Panic Among The Liberals

The climate of opinion has changed for the worse. Principles have been abandoned in panic. The notion that the right of Congress to investigate is unlimited has been accepted. The pro cold war liberals, anxious to shield their own respectability, have begun to accept the idea that Congress has a right to stage ideological inquisitions. Thus the New Republic in its April 20 issue cut the ground out from under itself by saying "Congress has the right to investigate subversion in the churches in its general inquiry into the activities of the Communist party." If it has a right to investigate "subversion" (nobody asks any longer just what that means—this bogeyman word for nonconformity has also been accepted by the housebroken liberals) in the churches, then it has a right to investigate "subversion" in the press.

The logical consequences were those drawn by the conservative Washington Star which said of the McCarthy-Wechsler affair, "The first amendment forbids Congress to make any law abridging the freedom of the press. It hardly follows, however, that this guarantee of a free press confers immunity from investigation on an editor. If a Congressional committee has a right to expose the fact that a union official or a teacher, for instance, is a Communist or a former Communist, it certainly has the same right with respect to an editor." Once the premise is accepted, the gate is wide-open to the witch hunt.

What About The First Amendment?

But is the premise correct? Does the First Amendment provide no bar against indirect attacks from government? The Supreme Court not so many years ago invalidated a Huey Long tax on newspaper advertising on the ground that such taxes could be turned into an indirect restriction upon freedom of the press. How much more repressive is the fear of Congressional smearing! The First Amendment says Congress shall make no law setting up an Established Church. Could Congress under the guise of investigating Communism harass ministers who believe in certain theological doctrines which other ministers think conducive to Communism? Could an investigating committee apply the standards of Catholicism, or fundamental Protestantism, as a means of rooting out "crypto-Communism"?

The power of investigation is an auxiliary to the power of legislation. Congress has a right to inform itself about matters on which it may legislate. But can it under the First Amendment legislate control over ideas, whether political or theological? This is the basic question. It is only by asserting that the sphere of ideas is beyond the power of the State, it is only by reaffirming this traditional conception of the First Amendment, that the witch hunt may be fought. But this requires the courage to say that Communists have the same political rights as anyone else. Not to say it is to endanger everyone's rights.

The Fatal Consequences

For if Congress may treat certain ideas as criminal, if it may set up a Committee to act as a grand jury operating in public without the safeguards of secrecy, then it may not only ask questions about political affiliation but about a man's writing and preaching. What if he never was a Communist, or is now an anti-Communist? If Congress and the government have a right to put ideas under surveillance, they have a right to examine writings or sermons which propagate ideas that may conduce to Communism or shield Communism. Wechsler says he is not longer a Communist. He claims to be an anti-Communist. But he has criticized the FBI as a thought police. He has defended Communists against Smith Act prosecution. So he is attacked as crypto-Communist. This is where acceptance of that fatal first premise leads.

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• *Editor and Publisher*, I. F. STONE

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CIVIL LIBERTIES FRONT: A CROWDED WEEK

Hat's Off

To Judge Luther W. Youngdahl for an eloquent decision in the old-fashioned libertarian tradition knocking out four of the seven counts in the indictment of Owen Lattimore for perjury and casting doubt on the remaining three.

The Lattimore case can be won when it comes to trial next Fall and a victory in it would be a terrific blow at McCarran, who forced this spurious indictment, and McCarthy, who first made the fake charges. Lattimore needs help and can be reached care of Johns Hopkins in Baltimore. Those readers who would like to rally support among their friends may have free copies for distribution of our issue No. 5, with its "The Truth About The Lattimore Case", the full behind-the-scenes story.

We refer to McCarthy's as "fake charges" on the authority of Judge Youngdahl himself. For after surveying the vague allegations of the indictment, the Judge commented drily in his decision, "Apparently the Committee [i.e. the McCarran Committee] could discover no evidence from its investigation or the testimony of various witnesses that defendant lied in denying that he was a Communist, a member of the Communist party, a Soviet spy or a fellow traveller." McCarthy called Lattimore the No. 1 Soviet spy in this country. Budenz called him a Communist. Lattimore was not indicted for denying either charge. Apparently even the McCarran committee didn't believe them.

Last Chance

In the high vaulted marble chamber where the U.S. Supreme Court last Monday heard the final argument in the Bridges case, there was little echo of the tumultuous 20 years in which the San Francisco waterfront interests, the government and latterly his own enemies in the CIO have tried to "get" Bridges.

The argument went round and round the legal metaphysics of what precisely constitutes fraud, and whether the repeated hearings and trials to which Bridges has been subjected brought the matter under *res adjudicata* or *collateral estoppel.*

A diminutive counsel for the government, dapper in a frock coat, put the matter more succinctly than he himself perhaps intended. "It seems to me," he said at the end of his argument, "you get nowhere if you take a broad view of this case."

From the standpoint of the government, this is all too true. For on a broad view, it would be asked how often a man could be put through the wringer of trial on the same political charges in a country that constantly advertises itself as free and has a constitution which forbids double jeopardy.

On a broad view, one would see in all its embarrassing clarity the contrast between the treatment accorded Joe Ryan on the corrupt East coast and the treatment accorded Harry Bridges on the West coast. On a broad view, it would be seen how the government has favored the gangster type of labor leadership and pursued with implacable hostility a man who neither betrayed his workers nor dealt dishonorably with their employers. From the government's point of view you do indeed "get nowhere" by taking a broad view.

All the blood and agony of those 20 years had been sifted out of the argument by certiorari. The urbane Chief Justice enlivened the proceedings with an occasional joke. Mr. Justice Frankfurter was as sharp and witty in his questions as if examining students at Harvard Law. The tenor of his questions, like those of Mr. Justice Black, seemed to favor Bridges. Douglas was silent. Jackson and Clark absented themselves as former Attorneys General who had engaged in the Bridges hunt. The others, including the Chief Justice, seemed to have their minds firmly made up. It looked as if Bridges this time faces jail, 4-3 or even perhaps 5-2.

This conviction of fraud was brought about by circumventing the double jeopardy clause and getting around the statute of limitations, but law counts for less and less these days. Bridges can only be saved from jail and the U.S. from the disgrace of this whole affair if the leaders of the labor movement can be prevailed on to join in a campaign for pardon.

This time Bridges was the victim not of the waterfront interests, which have grown to tolerate and like him, but of the cold war split in the labor movement. He was warned to line up for the cold war—or else. Now that the cold war may be abating, perhaps his old colleagues of the CIO will make amends. Perhaps.

Antiquated Notions

The Congressional witch hunt is now to be a four instead of a three ring circus. To the Velde, Jenner and McCarthy committees is now added a special Subcommittee on Security Affairs established by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, with Wiley of Wisconsin as chairman; the other two members are Ferguson of Michigan and Gillette of Iowa.

The subcommittee made its debut last week-end with the release of a report on "Adequacy of U.S. Laws With Respect to Offenses Against National Security." Of course it found these laws inadequate.

The report complains that the constitutional provisions on treason make conviction difficult and that "Constitutional guaranties of a public trial and due process of law make it difficult to prove certain offenses, particularly espionage, without endangering national security." It is a good thing the Founding Fathers are dead or they'd be subpoenaed for some pretty stiff questioning.

The subcommittee complains about our allies as well as our Constitution. "In many allied countries," says Senator Wiley's preface to the report, "the security problem has been aggravated by the fact that their governments and their peoples have traditionally taken a far more tolerant view of Communism and Communists than we as a people feel the present situation and the past record justifies. Some of these countries have systems of law which are even more antiquated in this respect than our own . . ." The British, for example, notoriously backward, are said still to have something called *habeas corpus.*

Senator Wiley generously recognizes that "each nation must of course remain sovereign in its own internal affairs" *but* "the internal security of many countries has become inextricably intertwined with the very lives of our own American sons who are stationed in those lands . . ." The Senator feels therefore that it is not "presumptous" of the subcommittee "to call the attention of our friends overseas to facts of this nature." Those allies who show no disposition to adopt more up-to-date legal systems will have only themselves to blame if some day they find their mutual security allowances cut. The free world cannot afford to subsidize legal backwardness.

The subcommittee endorses the move underway this week to legalize wiretapping but judging by its first report will not rest content until we have gone further and at least restored secret trial in star chamber. To read its report is to realize how immeasurably the security problem would be eased simply by repealing the Constitution. Senator Wiley hesitates to say so publicly but obviously it's antiquated, too.

Good News

Attorney General Brownell has agreed to reopen the case of Ignatz Mazei, see the *Weekly*, No. 11, "Detention for Life—On Undisclosed Charges," where we told the story of this long time alien resident of Buffalo who faced life imprisonment on Ellis Island on secret charges. We are happy to report that copies of that issue, circulated last March by Mazei's counsel among friendly members of Congress, helped.

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JENNINGS PERRY'S PAGE

Freedom and Fortune Bid for Treason and Theft

At this writing, our reception committee at Kimpo airport still is scanning the skies for the first enemy pilot to accept Gen. Mark Clark's generous invitation to bring in his jet and receive 100,000 pieces of silver, and the keys to the Free World. The delay, one can imagine, has been as gratifying to one side as to the other. For though there hardly can be any question of the firmness of the offer, with the Supreme Commander's name behind it, nor of the Free World's ability to pay, certain aspects of the project appear to need further study and clarification.

For instance, the air and odor of the reception itself, when the respondent pilot, having carefully followed the instructions given to assure him safe conduct through our defenses, sets down his MiG-15 or "other Russian-built jet combat type" at Kimpo. Should the occasion be festive or solemn, open to the press or discreetly screened?

The role of the enemy pilot has been, to be sure, elaborately cued for him. He has been addressed in the leaflet as "courageous." His desire to liberate himself from the "vicious whip" of his Red masters has been sympathetically suggested to him. He has only to step out of his plane hailing Freedom—and pick up his check.

He will have hit the jackpot; with his fortune (which itself would not connote freedom to many a man not now, or ever, behind the Iron Curtain) he can proceed, the Free World promises him, to any corner of the Free World his heart fancies: to New Jersey or Long Island, perhaps, with winters at Miami Beach. (Nice little places at Miami Beach for much less than $100,000.) For the rest of his years, he can have comfort and respectability . . .

It is when one considers this item of prospective comfort and respectability that reasonable doubts must arise both as to the ability of the Free World to guarantee it and the ability of the freedom-seeking pilot to experience, within himself, the said blessings. Indeed, it must be perceived that even the reception at Kimpo can be brought off handsomely only if none says aloud what all will be aware of—that a single breath of candor at the moment of liberation would name the courageous pilot traitor, and thief as well as traitor, and his Free World receivers as suborners of his treason and his larceny.

It is the extra added attraction, the $100,000, of course, which makes the situation delicate. Elsewhere, as at Bornholm, a pilot from behind the Curtain can land his plane in the Free World and claim asylum—and respect—on no other showing than his love of liberty. Theoretically he has only borrowed the plane; it will be returned to its owners. But the operation General Clark's proposals have set us up for in the Far East is a horse of a different shade and breed.

We are dangling a straight cash bribe before enemy soldiers under oath—the universal soldier's oath—to serve their homelands. We are tempting them to desert on the battlefield for pay—for very high pay. From the beginning, we have offered them freedom: now, we are telling them to steal and bring over to us their side's military secrets and we will make them rich. I submit that it will be next to impossible for us ever to feel real neighborly esteem for any enemy pilots in Korea who may liberate themselves to us on those terms no matter what pleasantries we organize for their reception at Kimpo airfield near Seoul.

We may be able to bring ourselves to welcome them as freedom-loving brothers, while slipping them their $50,000 and $100,000 checks under the table, but we will have to hold our noses on the side.

I should not be surprised if one day before long, perhaps before this is in print, some Red pilot sneaks off to Kimpo with a copy of the General's glittering IOU in his padded sleeve. In all lands some men have a price, and we are bidding high. Then we should have our MiG-15 to tear apart to our complete satisfaction, since we got only photographs and measurements of the one at Bornholm. And the Russians would have to develop another secret to hide from us as long as they could.

In that case, General Clark's psychological warfare experts will have proved a point: that when all else fails the Free World can go out and buy what it wants . . . in the black market.

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